

The mystery begins...Let us gather round the words the prophets spoke long ago and believe: Emmanuel is on the way.

~ Roddy Hamilton

November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m.

Prelude

Keith Ciccone, organ

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Karen E. Gale

Passing the Peace

Peace be with you!

Peace be with you!

Let us pass the peace with one another...

*Introit

Jesus! Jesus! Oh...What a Wonderful Child!

Jesus! Jesus! Oh...what a wonderful child!

Jesus! Jesus!.... So lowly...meek and mild.

New life, new hope, new joy he brings

Listen.....to the angels sing

Glory, glory, glo-ry to the newborn king.

*Advent Wreath Lighting c.pilgrimpress

You know what time it is! It is already the moment to wake from sleep.

Today we throw off the bedcovers of despair. We rise from the muffling blankets of cynicism.

The hour is already here, even as we are waiting.

**Soon—yes, very soon—our hope will shine as bright as the sun,
and we will live in the light of God who is already with us.**

Our hope burns and cannot be extinguished.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not overcome it.

Hymn 89

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Unison Prayer

Holy and loving God,

we have dwelt in darkness and preferred it to the light.

We have been proud of our accomplishments and despaired over our shortcomings.

Smooth down the mountains of our pride, and lift up the valleys of our doubts.

Open a path in the wilderness of our lives that we might find our way to you again.

Refine us and prepare us once again for life in your kingdom.

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Amen.

* Indicates all who are able may stand.

Please silence your cellphones.

Scripture

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;

Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called “the Baptizer,” was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: “Change your life. God’s kingdom is here.”

Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!

John dressed in a camel-hair habit tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life.

When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! And don't think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as father. Being a descendant of Abraham is neither here nor there.

Descendants of Abraham are a dime a dozen. What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire.

"I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I'm a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned."

*Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

Sermon

"Here Comes John...Ugh"

Rev. Karen E. Gale

*Hymn 88

Canticle of the Turning

Prayer of the People/Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our Father (Creator), who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done; on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Musical Reflection

Dedication to the Offering

*Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God, all creatures, here, below.
Praise God, above, ye heav'nly hosts.
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication

God, you are coming to your people to reign with justice. Help us to recognize your coming in fair trade campaigns, in peacemaking delegations, in living wage legislation, in powers and corporations that choose to put human wellbeing first. Help us to prepare for your coming by taking inventory of our choices and our own lives. Meet us in the challenge to truly be ready for the coming of Jesus. Amen.

*Hymn 83

People Look East

*Benediction

Postlude

First Church Braintree Announcements



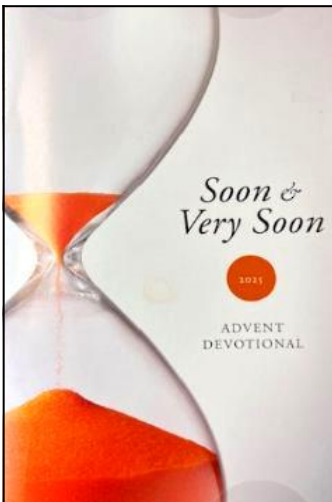
DCF Holiday Wish Lists Please take a tag and purchase gifts for a youth in need. We ask that you get the gifts in to the First Church office no later than **Thursday, December 11th.**

And remember: **DO NOT WRAP THE GIFT** - Gift bags only please. **Don't forget to attach the first name & last initial of the child to each gift.**

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Search Team Event "Our Living History" - TODAY, Sun, Nov 30 during Coffee Hour
Drive & Drop Food Collection - Wed, Dec 3 @ 5-6:30pm
Prudential Thu, Dec 4 @ 10am in the office

Bible Study on Revelation - Pastor Karen is leading a class on Revelation on Thursday mornings from 10-11:30am in the Chapel. The next class is on December 11.



**Advent
Devotionals**
are available now.

**Pick one up at the
back of the church.**

Help Needed!

Barbara leaves for Florida next week so we need people to step up and host the coffee hour... Can you bring some treats to share for our Coffee Hour one Sunday?



Sign up in the Lower Parish Hall!



The Halls are Decked!



Thank you

to everyone who helped
decorate the church last Sunday!

*We hope you enjoyed
this festive start to the
Advent & Christmas season!*



ADVENT & CHRISTMASTIDE

DAILY CALENDAR

	DECI	2	3	4	5	6
	Take a long shower. Marvel at the ways water can not only destroy but sustain as well.	As you brush your teeth, think about the last time you bit someone with words. Repent.	Let something go today: a chore, a bug in your house, someone's mistake, your own mistake. Just let it be free!	Find a rock and draw a house on it. Pray to be sturdy and steady for yourself and others.	Turn off the lights and spend five minutes in silence. See what God whispers to you in that eternity.	Open your hands under a stream of warm water. Surrender to God.
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Write a limerick about Christmas. Every act of creation matters.	Put your hands in icy cold water. This is John's call to a baptism of renewal.	Stage a mini Christmas pageant using your nativity figurines (or sock puppets!). Narrate the story aloud.	Write yourself a letter from God. Mail it without postage. When it returns, reflect on the slow work of God.	Pray today over the last 5 people who texted you.	Add some flowers to your home, and give thanks for those who speak truth to power.	Make a list: ten things that must be done and ten good things that are already here.
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Make a list of your shortcomings, then listen to "O Come All Ye Faithful." You are both flawed and faithful.	Drink a glass of water, and ask yourself what you're really thirsting for.	Go for a walk. Look around you for the unexpected, the dissonant, the holy.	Browse a seed catalog. Luxuriate in thoughts of how life could be next summer.	Stare at your eyes in the mirror. Recognize in yourself the enduring fractal of God.	Embellish something today. With glitter, beads, gel pens, sprinkles, make the world sparklier.	Read the news deeply enough that you see Jesus alive and at work. Christmas has already come.
21	22	23	24	CHRISTMAS	26	27
Remember to go to church!	Play your five favorite carols, singing at top volume. You belong to this heritage.	Decorate a gingerbread person. Think about your own body: its hurt, its strength, its pleasure.	Just for tonight, you are Luciano Pavarotti or Leontyne Price. Belt out "O Holy Night."	Give thanks for the world already being born.	What of your faith do you really need to be true? Write it down.	There is no such thing as other people's children. Make a generous gift to a child-saving org today.
28	29	30	31	JAN 1	2	3
Write "Praise the Lord" in the most beautiful way you know how: calligraphy, cursive, bubble letters!	Call or text a member of your "chosen family" and tell them how glad you are that you belong to each other.	Pray to God with all kinds of titles: Mx., Mrs., Mr., Coach, Capt., Dr., Msg., Prof., HRH, Dame!	Kiss your hands and cradle your face with love.	Give your poverty to God today. Hold out your empty hands and pray that poverty becomes providence.	Think of plans you have. Open the Bible to any random page, and see if God shows you a truth there.	Don't give way to despair! Name aloud five signs of hope you've seen recently.
4	5	EPIPHANY				
Make a feast at home. Even if it's leftovers, set a table before God and dine fancy with Them.	Refuse to rush. Breathe. Do only what is necessary; let the rest wait.	Go outside. Face east, and give thanks for God in your past. Next face west, and give thanks for God in your future.				

Daily prompts from Molly Baskette & Quinn Caldwell to accompany the *Soon & Very Soon* 2025 Advent Devotional.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BRAINTREE

MEMORIAL CHRISTMAS HYMN SING
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025
AT 9:30 AM



To sponsor one or more of the following hymns *In Memory of* or *In Honor of* a loved one, please indicate your name (given by), their name, your hymn choice and amount of donation.

Suggested donation per hymn is \$10 but any amount is appreciated.

To ensure your request is included in our special bulletin, please return this request form to the church office or place it on the collection plate *no later than* **Sunday, November 30.**

Choice of Hymns:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>O Come, All Ye Faithful</i> | 6. <i>The First Nowell</i> |
| 2. <i>What Child is This?</i> | 7. <i>Hark, The Herald Angels Sing</i> |
| 3. <i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i> | 8. <i>I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day</i> |
| 4. <i>Silent Night</i> | 9. <i>It Came Upon A Midnight Clear</i> |
| 5. <i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i> | 10. <i>Joy to the World</i> |

Please PRINT the names below *exactly* as you wish them to appear in the bulletin.

Given by: _____
(Write your name as you wish it to appear in the bulletin)

Hymn #	Hymn Name <small>Abbreviate if necessary</small>	<u>Circle One</u>	<i>In Memory of or In Honor of</i> <small>(Please print name clearly, exactly as you wish it listed.)</small>	Amount Donated <small>(Suggested amount is \$10 per hymn.)</small>
		Memory Honor		\$
		Memory Honor		\$
		Memory Honor		\$
		Memory Honor		\$
		Memory Honor		\$
Checks should be made payable to First Congregational Church of Braintree. Please write "Hymn Sing" in the memo.				Total

Thank you for your support.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS 2025

We invite church members to donate poinsettias for Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24th. These flowers can be in memory of or in honor of loved ones.



- We purchase our poinsettia plants from **Almquist Flowerland**.
- Each plant costs **\$14.50**.
- Available in Red, White, Pink or possibly Marble
(if marble is not available we will order a different color)
- **All orders must be in by Friday, Dec 12th.**

Please be sure to fill out **all 4 sections** and print clearly so we can properly acknowledge your gift in the bulletin.

1

Given by: (your name) _____

2

Who are you honoring?

Flower 1: ☐ In Memory of or ☐ In Honor of

Name (s) of Honoree: _____

Choose color: ☐ Red ☐ White ☐ Pink ☐ Marble ☐ No Preference

Flower 2: ☐ In Memory of or ☐ In Honor of

Name (s) of Honoree: _____

Choose color: ☐ Red ☐ White ☐ Pink ☐ Marble ☐ No Preference

3

After Christmas Eve, do you wish your poinsettias to be used:

- ☐ For Personal Use or
- ☐ As a Gift to the Church (for distribution to homebound friends)

4

Amount due: # of poinsettias _____ x \$14.50 each = \$ _____

Checks should be made payable to First Congregational Church of Braintree

The First Congregational Church of Braintree is an Open & Affirming Congregation working in partnership with all churches of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all God's children into Christian faith regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, political stance or theological perspective, national origin, mental health status, physical and cognitive abilities, and the many diverse forms of family configurations. We proclaim and affirm that full and equal participation in the life and leadership of our church is open to all. We seek to continue learning and growing together as the inclusive Body of Christ. We are committed to spreading the light and love of Christ into the world through worship and service.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.



About Today's Service: We are live-streaming today's service.

Subscribe to the First Church YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTaGrBGnYzfM66pS7Bd4PvA>



Non-perishable Food Pantry donations are collected for The Marge Crispin Center on the **first Wednesday of the Month** in front of the church. Contact free! Just drive by and drop. Or place your donations in the basket in LPH or the Narthex. Thank you!

Televised Worship Services are broadcast on BCAM: Verizon Channel 28, Comcast Channel 9, on Saturday at 8:00 AM and Sunday at 10:00 AM.

First Church Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00am – 1:00pm.

**BELIEVE
THERE IS
GOOD IN
THE WORLD**



Rev. Karen E. Gale, Interim Pastor ❖ revkarengale@gmail.com

Keith Ciccone, Director of Music ❖ keciccon@aol.com

Mattie Gietman, Dir. Children's Ministry ❖ mattie@firstchurchbraintree.com

Deb McMartin, Administrator ❖ office@firstchurchbraintree.com

Valerie Fink, Bookkeeper ❖ finance@firstchurchbraintree.com

